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General and complete disarmament

Letter dated 1 April 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the last of Tajikistan's stocks of anti-personnel mines, numbering 200 items, was destroyed on 31 March 2004 at the Lyaur military testing ground in a suburb of Dushanbe, the capital of the Republic of Tajikistan. This act was witnessed by officials of the Republic of Tajikistan and representatives of diplomatic missions of foreign States and international organizations accredited to the Republic of Tajikistan, non-governmental organizations, and national and foreign mass media.

In accordance with article 4 of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Republic of Tajikistan, prior to 1 April 2004, undertook the obligation to destroy all its stocks of anti-personnel mines, which numbered 3,399 items. Accordingly, on 31 March 2004, the Republic of Tajikistan carried out one of its main obligations under the aforementioned international instrument.

In the work of achieving the objectives of the Ottawa Convention, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan continues to attach importance to international cooperation, first and foremost within the framework of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). For example, on 20 June 2003, an agreement was signed between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on implementation of the project "Support for the efforts of the Republic of Tajikistan to overcome landmine problems". In implementing this agreement, the Government of Tajikistan established the Tajik Centre on Questions relating to Landmines, whose activities are carried out with the support of the Government of the United Kingdom.

At the invitation of the Government the Republic of Tajikistan, the Swiss Demining Foundation (SDF) opened an office in Dushanbe in the middle of 2003. Two investigative groups made up of servicemen from the engineering troops of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Tajikistan are carrying out activities with the Foundation's assistance. Their activities in surveying and demining the areas that

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had been mined during the civil conflict (1992-1997) are conducted with the financial support of the Government of Japan.

The contribution by the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe has been significant in mobilizing funds from donor States in order to carry out demining projects in Tajikistan.

With the support of the United Nations Development Programme and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has organized the holding of the Conference "Progress towards Achieving the Objectives of the Ottawa Convention in Central Asia", which will be held in Dushanbe on 15 and 16 April 2004. It is expected that high-level delegates from the States of Central Asia, China and Afghanistan, donor States and international organizations will participate in it. The Conference is timed to occur before the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention, which will take place from 29 November to 3 December 2004 in Nairobi.

I should be very grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly under agenda item 73 (p), "General and complete disarmament: implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction".

(*Signed*) Rashid **Alimov**
Ambassador